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# True North: Discover Your Authentic Leadership



## Synopsis

True North shows how anyone who follows their internal compass can become an authentic leader. This leadership tour de force is based on research and first-person interviews with 125 of today's top leaders with some surprising results. In this important book, acclaimed former Medtronic CEO Bill George and coauthor Peter Sims share the wisdom of these outstanding leaders and describe how you can develop as an authentic leader. True North presents a concrete and comprehensive program for leadership success and shows how to create your own Personal Leadership Development Plan centered on five key areas: Knowing your authentic self, Defining your values and leadership principles, Understanding your motivations, Building your support team, Staying grounded by integrating all aspects of your life. True North offers an opportunity for anyone to transform their leadership path and become the authentic leader they were born to be. Personal, original, and illuminating stories from Warren Bennis, Sir Adrian Cadbury, George Shultz (former U.S. secretary of state), Charles Schwab, John Whitehead (Cochairman, Goldman Sachs), Anne Mulcahy (CEO, Xerox), Howard Schultz (CEO, Starbucks), Dan Vasella (CEO, Novartis), John Brennan (Chairman, Vanguard), Carol Tome (CFO, Home Depot), Donna Dubinsky (CEO/cofounder, Palm), Alan Horn (President, Warner Brothers), Ann Moore (CEO, Time, Inc.) and many others illustrate the transitions that shape the type of leaders who will thrive in the 21st century. Bill George (Cambridge, MA) has spent over 30 years in executive leadership positions at Litton, Honeywell, and Medtronic. As CEO of Medtronic, he built the company into the world's leading medical technology company as its market capitalization increased from \$1.1 billion to \$60 billion. Since 2004, he has been a professor at the Harvard Business School. His 2004 book *Authentic Leadership* (0-7879-7528-1) was a *BusinessWeek* bestseller. Peter Sims (San Francisco, CA) established *Leadership Perspectives*, a course on leadership development at the Stanford Graduate School of Business and cofounded the London office of Summit Partners, a leading investment firm. Their Web site is [www.truenorthleaders.com](http://www.truenorthleaders.com).

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

It is preferable but not imperative to have read previously published *Authentic Leadership* before reading this book which Bill George also wrote, with Peter Sims. In the former, George observes that authentic leaders are first and foremost authentic human beings. For me, this is his key point and because it seems so obvious, it may also seem simplistic. On the contrary, he has cut through all the rhetoric and urges his reader to examine her or his own core values. For most of us, that is an immensely difficult, perhaps painful experience. In this context, I am reminded of the fact that in *The Inferno*, Dante reserves the last and worst ring in hell for those who, in a moral crisis, preserve their neutrality. Throughout all manner of organizations, there are women and men who are authentic leaders and should be commended. The reality is, their respective organizations need more of them. Indeed, all of us in our global community need more of them. In *Authentic Leadership*, a truly unique and compelling book, George challenges us to join their number. What we have in *True North* is a further development of George's concept of authentic leadership but also a rigorous, revealing, and rewarding analysis of what George and Sims learned during their interviews of more than 100 leaders. Most of their names were previously unfamiliar to me, although all are eminently worthy of the attention they receive. (That's a key point: Many - too many - studies of "leadership" limit their attention to C-level executives - usually "celebrity CEOs" -- when, in fact, authentic leadership is needed at all levels and in all areas of an organization, whatever its size and nature may be.

"*True North*" by Bill George and Peter Sims, has been sitting on my "To Be Read" shelf for awhile. I finally pulled it down and drank from the refreshing stream of wisdom and insights that flowed from the authors' minds and spirits. Having served very successfully as Chairman and CEO of Medtronic, Mr. George has carved out another career as a much loved and respected professor at Harvard Business School, where I have had the privilege of interacting with him on several occasions. The authors and their research assistants interviewed well over 100 successful leaders whose stories are profiled in "*True North*." The resulting work is simultaneously inspiring and humbling. Each

chapter ends with an urging to take the relevant self-assessments that populate Appendix C. The book is so powerful and so helpful that I am already figuring out which of those whom I coach and mentor will most benefit from receiving a copy. The book is a step by step exposition of how truly authentic leaders got to be that way, beginning with telling their life stories. The authors are very helpful in breaking leadership into three life phases: Preparing for Leadership - up to age 30 Leading - 30-60 Giving Back - 60 and beyond One of the characteristics of the Preparing for Leadership phase is "bumping up against the world. Here is how Randy Komisar, former CEO of LucasArts, describes this phenomenon: "We begin life on a linear path where success is based on having a clear target. Life gets complicated when the targets aren't clear anymore, and you have to set your own targets. By rubbing up against the world, you get to know yourself.

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